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Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 10
October 28, 1962, 11:10 AM

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The full Tass text of the Khrushchev reply to the President offering to withdraw Soviet offensive weapons from Cuba under UN supervision had been read by all prior to the opening of the meeting. (It had been received over the FBIS ticker beginning about 9:00 AM -- copy attached.)

Secretary Rusk began by making general comments to the effect that everyone present had helped to bring about the highly advantageous resolution of the Cuban missile crisis. Mr. Bundy interrupted to say that everyone knew who were hawks and who were doves, but that today was the doves' day.

Secretary McNamara said we would not have to face a decision on halting a Bloc ship today because the Soviet tanker Graznyy was lying dead in the water outside the quarantine zone and no other Bloc ships, if they continued toward Cuba, would be reaching the barrier.

Secretary McNamara and Secretary Rusk recommended, and the President agreed, that no air reconnaissance missions be flown today.

The President asked what we would substitute for our air surveillance of Cuba.

Secretary McNamara said this surveillance might be by the UN or a joint inspection of U.S./UN inspectors in a neutral plane, flown by Brazilians or Canadians. He said our objective should be to have reconnaissance carried out by the UN tomorrow. Technically, this could be arranged, but we do not know whether the UN would undertake the task.

The President suggested that we tell the UN they must carry out reconnaissance or else we will. He authorized the release to UN officials of classified information on Cuba, including photographs and refugee reports, [redacted]. The purpose of the release of this information on Soviet armaments in Cuba was to facilitate the inspection task which we expected the UN to promptly undertake.

Secretary Rusk, in commenting on Khrushchev's reply, called attention to the text which said the Russians would "come to an agreement." He said Kuznetsov was coming to New York to conduct the negotiations. He suggested that we pick up and accept Khrushchev's description of what he was prepared to withdraw from Cuba, i.e. "offensive weapons."

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The President called attention to the IL-28 bombers which he said we should ask the Russians to withdraw by making a private approach to Khrushchev. He said we should not get "hung up" on the IL-28 bombers, but we should seek to include them in the Soviet definition of "offensive weapons" or "weapons we call offensive."

General Taylor said our objective should be the status quo ante.

The President agreed, but added that he did not want to get into a position where we would appear to be going back on our part of the deal. The IL-28 bombers were less important than the strategic missiles. Admittedly, we would face the problem of Soviet armaments in Cuba if the Russians continued to build up their defensive capability there.

At this point the Attorney General arrived.

The President agreed to a statement to be made public, as revised in the meeting. He asked that a draft reply to Khrushchev's statement be prepared for him to consider. He directed that comments by everyone on the Soviet statement be reserved. Our posture is to be one of welcoming the Soviet offer to take out the offensive weapons under UN inspection, but attention should be called to the many problems we would encounter in the implementation of Khrushchev's offer. We should point out that we were under no illusion that the problem of Soviet weapons in Cuba is solved. In addition, he said we should make clear that we can draw no general conclusions about how the Russians will act in the future in areas other than Cuba. He made specific mention of the problem of Communist subversion in Latin America and asked that we refer to this problem either in our letter to Khrushchev or in U Thant's letter to Khrushchev. He directed that Ambassador Stevenson be asked to talk to UN officials about this aspect of the Cuban problem.

Bromley Smith

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